



BRYAN TAYLOR PHOTO

youngsters head down March's Hill in Newburyport yesterday afternoon after school. Many of 17 Costa Rican exchange students were there for their first time sledding now.

Newburyport's Kelley School was being praised two weeks ago by parents and in the press because none of its fourth-graders failed any section of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test last spring.

Yesterday, the state released statistics saying the school failed to improve student performance on the test over the last three years as much as the state had said it should.

Just these sort of reviews of MCAS results frustrate local educators. How are schools — and parents — to make sense of such contradictory information?

"To me it's crazy," Kelley Principal Jennifer Roberts said. "I try not to over-emphasize it in a way that makes everyone else crazy."

Roberts said other measurements show the school's students are doing well and MCAS results need to be evaluated as part of this variety of assessments, ranging from standardized tests to portfolios of student work.

"It's difficult because it's very political and the media's involved in it and there's always another piece coming up," Roberts said.

Moving target

The state Department of Education set improvement goals for school districts across the state after the results for the first round of MCAS testing were released in 1998. Schools whose students on average did well had to improve by one to three points out of the 280 possible; schools whose students scored poorly had to improve by five to seven.

MCAS, page A12

School	Reading	Math	Science	Overall
Armsbury				
Elementary	F	F	F	F
Cashman	F	E	E	E
Middle	M	F	F	F
High	F	A	A	F
Georgetown				
Penn Brook	Data under review			
Middle	F	F	F	F
High	M	E	A	E
Newburyport				
Brown	F	F	E	F
Kelley	No content ratings			
Bresnahan	F	A	M	F
Nock Middle	M	E	M	M
High	Data under review			
Pontucket				
Bagnall	M	E	E	E
Donaghue	A	F	M	F
Page	F	F	E	F
Middle	E	E	E	E
High	F	A	F	F
Triton				
Salisbury	F	F	M	F
Newbury	A	E	E	F
Pine Grove	A	M	E	M
Middle	E	M	M	F
High	F	M	A	A
Whittier	F	F	F	F

Key:
Performance rating: H - high; M - moderate; L - low; CL - critically low.
Improvement rating: E - exceeded; M - met; A - approached; F - failed to meet.
 "Performance rating" is a function of how well students did on the MCAS. Goals were set with lower scores expected to improve scores most. How well those goals were met then led to the "Improvement rating."
 SOURCE: MASS. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

fficer accused of assaulting girlfriend on d

By JESSICA BENSON
Daily News staff

NEWBURYPORT A police officer has been charged with assaulting his girlfriend, a co-officer, while on duty in the police station.

A restraining order against officer John Engle, 25, of 212th St., Salisbury, was

issued on Dec. 18, the same day that parking officer Kristen Kozacka claims he made threatening phone calls from the station to her Salisbury home. He later physically assaulted Kozacka when she went to station to file a report, Kozacka claimed in a statement made with the restraining order application.

A source said that Engle is currently on

administrative leave. Police Chief Larry Streeter refused to say anything about the matter and would not confirm the report.

"My policy is not to comment on internal matters," Streeter said.

Reached by telephone at his home last night, Engle also declined to comment.

Engle has been ordered to stay at least 50 yards away from Kozacka's home and her

job at the Women's Crisis Center in Newburyport. He is not to have contact with her, except for inadvertent work.

The initial restraining order was issued by Newburyport District Court on Jan. 2, and again yesterday. A hearing is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Jan. 13 in Salisbury.

owley resident given conditions on contacting town employees

By JESON INGRAHAM
Daily News staff

ROWLEY A resident who warned town employees on Monday that Rowley could be the next "Wakefield" has agreed to a set of conditions in contacting town employees, police said this morning.

A police sent what Chief Kevin Barry

called a "private" letter to Nicholas Hurlin of 419 Central St., laying out a series of requests.

"When he wants to visit the Town Hall, there are certain conditions he has to conform to," Barry said. "Hopefully, the issue that happened on Monday is over."

Hurlin appeared before the board on Monday to complain about being evicted

from his home on 27 Central St. 12 years ago for septic system violations. As the exchange intensified, Hurlin indicated that he wanted to prevent the shooting tragedies in Wakefield and Colebrook, N.H., from happening in Rowley.

Selectman Robert Madden said Hurlin made a similar comment to Board of Health member Charles Costello on the

same day, and the warnings were appreciated.

"We as town officials cannot allow any individual to terrorize town employees," Madden said. "It just can't happen."

Madden said he has been in Rowley many years and, at times, has been

"You have to hold something constant to measure it and nothing is being held constant," Newburyport Superintendent Kathleen Smith said.

"They've done this too soon," said Amesbury Superintendent Stephen Gerber. "That's the problem."

Test results also do not yet reflect the benefits of programs schools have implemented in the last few years, Gerber said, such as the full-day kindergarten program Amesbury schools started last year. He believes another year or two is needed to get enough reliable data.

Triton Regional School District Superintendent Garry Murphy said the state's goals are too general.

"I think the improvement expectations are unrealistic in some areas," Murphy said. "You've got to look at each school individually."

School administrators warned that at small schools, such as those where fewer than 100 children are in each grade, a few children who score especially well or especially poorly can swing the overall average. The state doesn't even release separate subject area scores for schools like Kelley where fewer than 30 children took the test in any year. Partly because of this, Newburyport administrators are reluctant to compare scores at the city's three elementary schools.

And school leaders noted that students' socio-economic back-

exceeded improvement goals, while Donaghue failed to meet its goals. The difference was Bagnall's score improved by 5.5 points and Donaghue's didn't change at all.

The Page School in West Newbury also failed to meet its state-set improvement goals after the school's average score declined by half a point. But the school had an average score higher than the other two schools at 244.8 for 1999 and 2000. The state ranked Page as a high-performing school, based on its performance in 1998, the only school in the area at that level. Donaghue and Bagnall were ranked as moderately performing based on their scores that year.

"In high-performing schools, it's sometimes very challenging to keep meeting the raised bar," Pentucket Assistant Superintendent Peter McGinn said.

Schools that performed well initially and also improved will be honored by the state and spotlighted as models for other schools, according to the Department of Education's plan. Moderately or poorly performing schools that failed to meet state goals will receive a warning that they must strengthen their improvement efforts. Very poorly performing schools failing to show improvement could face takeover by the state.

Among local schools, only Whit-tier Regional Vocational Technical High School in Haverhill—ranked "critically low" on average scores and failing to meet any

answers. Local school administrators do not expect the MCAS information released yesterday to lead to new programs. Instead, school leaders planned to continue to better align their lessons to state guidelines, improve instruction through teacher training and add programs during and outside of classes to help struggling students.

Murphy said Triton hopes to continue reducing class sizes, which has over the past several years, and to add more day-to-day testing in a style similar to MCAS.

"I think one of the things we struggle with in this profession is we're a veteran group for the most part. Many of us have been teaching for 25 to 30 years," Pentucket McGinn said. "Have they been given time to become familiar with the (state) Board of Education standards for each discipline and then opted to instruct students based on each subject's standards?"

"I think that's quite a challenge for someone one year, two or three years from retirement. I don't think public educators are supported with time to re-evaluate their curriculum, their instruction."

To address this, Pentucket began providing time out of class this fall for teachers to develop new lessons in response to changing state guidelines. The district hopes to start an orientation program for new and young teachers this summer to expand upon this.

ROWLEY: Resident agrees to conditions

Continued from page A1

vocal critic of the town. But Hurlin took his protest to a new level on Monday, Madden said.

Barry would not disclose any details about the conditions, only that Hurlin had agreed to them. "I don't want to say anything that will escalate the situation any further," he said.

He said Hurlin's comments

about recent shootings caused "immediate concern."

Hurlin told selectmen he meant no harm by his statements. He was simply trying to warn the town that such a shooting could happen here if town officials continue to act as they have in the past.

"I don't want to see that happen here because of some bureaucrats who don't want to

work for the citizens," Hurlin following Monday's encounter.

Hurlin said he feels the town has left him nowhere to turn. He has taken the dispute over his Central Street home to court. He feels the issue has been dragging on for too long.

He sees recent encounters with town officials as interfering with efforts to find a resolution.

NEWBURYPORT

Man needs police escort to go into town offices

By JESON INGRAHAM
Daily News staff

ROWLEY — A man who disturbed several town employees with comments about the recent shootings in Wakefield cannot set foot into town offices without a police escort.

Rowley police have also instructed Rowley resident Nicholas Hurlin of 419 Central St., that he must make an appointment to visit the Town Hall or Town Hall Annex 24 hours in advance.

The details of the arrangement were sent to the town's various boards and offices in a letter yesterday, also given to The Daily News by a town employee. Rowley Police Chief Kevin Barry would not disclose the details of the Police Department's orders, hoping to lay the issue to rest.

The recent action follows a dispute between Hurlin and the selectmen on Monday. Hurlin waited for more than an hour to bring up a Board of Health decision that was made more than a

decade ago to condemn the house he owned on 27 Central St. due to problems with septic system regulations.

Hurlin has taken the matter to court, and said he continues to be treated unreasonably by town officials. And if they continue to act in a similar fashion, Hurlin suggests they could have another "Wakefield or Colebrook, N.H.," on their hands.

Hurlin insisted that the comments were not meant as a threat, rather a warning that "it could happen here."

But two weeks after seven people were gunned down at an Internet consulting firm in Wakefield, his assurances offered the selectmen little comfort.

Selectman Robert Madden said the town was forced to take action against Hurlin because they could not allow a resident to "terrorize" town employees.

Madden said he had received a call from a Board of Health member, Charles Costello, who was shaken up about similar comments in regards to recent shootings.

Cellu

BOSTON — Quiet nights finally on their way for those who live near the commuter road tracks in Newburyport. Gov. Paul Cellucci has signed legislation to ban on train whistles in town.

The legislation, which was signed on Jan. 4, requires safety devices — such as

Hearin

By JESON INGRAHAM
Daily News staff

ROWLEY — Fallowfield is an ideal spot for commercial development, but unless two-thirds of the town's voters agree, it's not a point.

That's the dilemma facing Planning Board members facing a proposal to extend the commercial zone on Route 1A from Wethersfield Street to the intersection of Main Street. The change would require a two-thirds vote at a town meeting, which could come before voters as early as this spring.

The board will hold a public hearing on Feb. 21 to discuss the matter.

The proposed zone would cover several non-commercial areas, including Jack Mill, Simard's Family and the Agawam Ferry.

Businessman Buckle has proposed the change with Jack Lutz, but the

ROWLEY Scouts to collect recyclables

The Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts will be collecting recyclable materials from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. this Saturday.



KEVIN BARRY
CHIEF OF POLICE

TOWN OF ROWLEY
Police Department

ROWLEY, MASS. 01969

ORI MA0052700

TELEPHONE
EMERGENCY 948-3388
BUSINESS 948-7641

*Rec'd
2/12/98
Fame*

February 11, 1998

Nicholas E. Hurlin
P.O. Box 107
Rowley, MA 01969

Re: Records of 1992/1993

Dear Mr. Hurlin:

The above dates are prior to this department being computerized. The files are located in the basement and will need to be hand searched. This task would have to be done on an overtime basis.

The hourly rate would be \$19.83. I estimate no less than 16 hours of work to fill this request. The total of \$317.28, is requested to be paid prior to the beginning of this search.

Thank you,

Kevin Barry
Chief of Police

cc: Board of Selectmen
cc: Atty Gorshel

TOWN OF ROWLEY
Police Department

ROWLEY, MASS. 01969

ORI MA0052700